

The Hearing Process



A committee may consider several bills during an afternoon. The committee chairperson will announce the order in which bills will be heard, the rules for testifying and whether there will be a time limit on your testimony. The length of time spent on each bill varies, depending largely on the number of people testifying, the length of their testimony and the number of questions asked by committee members. Be prepared to summarize your testimony in five minutes or less, if need be.

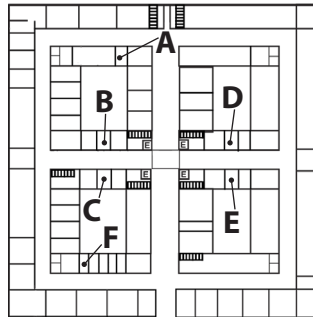
Hearings usually begin at 1:30 p.m. Each bill is presented by the senator who sponsors it. After the sponsoring senator finishes his or her introduction, the committee chair will typically ask proponents of the bill to come forward individually and state their reasons for supporting the measure. Then the chair will ask opponents of the bill to come forward and state their opinions. Often, committee chairpersons will then allow individuals to testify in a neutral capacity.

Before testifying at a committee hearing, you must fill out the testifier sign-in sheet provided in the hearing room. As you begin your testimony, identify yourself, spell your first and last name for the record, and state whom, if anyone, you represent. Be sure to speak directly into the microphone. It is important to remember that committee proceedings are transcribed verbatim.

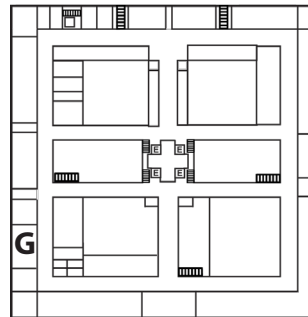
Letters or written communications expressing support, opposition or neutral testimony are also accepted by committees during a bill's public hearing. If you wish to send written information, address correspondence to the office of the senator who chairs the committee and allow enough time for it to arrive before the hearing.

Hearing Rooms

First Floor



Second Floor



Hearing Room	Committee	Meeting Days
Room 1003 (A)	Appropriations	W, Th, F
Room 1524 (B)	Appropriations	M, Tu
	Revenue	W, Th, F
Room 1525 (C)	Education	M, Tu
	Natural Resources	W, Th, F
	Nebraska Retirement Systems	(Meets at noon as scheduled)
Room 1510 (D)	General Affairs	M
	Urban Affairs	Tu
	Health and Human Services	W, Th, F
Room 1507 (E)	Banking, Commerce, and Insurance	M, Tu
	Government, Military and Veterans' Affairs	W, Th, F
Room 1113 (F)	Transportation and Telecommunications	M, Tu
	Judiciary	W, Th, F
Room 2102 (G)	Business & Labor	M
	Agriculture	Tu

For more information, contact:

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Testifying Tips



Public Hearing Testimony for the Nebraska Legislature

Citizen Testimony

As a concerned citizen, there are several ways in which you may communicate effectively with your senator in an attempt to suggest or influence legislation. One way is to testify at a legislative hearing.

At public hearings, citizens have an opportunity to make their views known and have them incorporated into the official committee record. In Nebraska, gubernatorial appointments and most bills, with the exception of a few technical bills, receive a public hearing by one of the Legislature's committees.

Generally, testimony on legislative bills is heard by one of the Legislature's 14 standing committees: Agriculture; Appropriations; Banking, Commerce and Insurance; Business and Labor; Education; General Affairs; Government, Military and Veterans' Affairs; Health and Human Services; Judiciary; Natural Resources; Nebraska Retirement Systems; Revenue; Transportation and Telecommunications; and Urban Affairs. Each of these committees has seven to nine members.

Public hearings on bills are typically held in the afternoons during the first half of the legislative session. Committees have regularly scheduled rooms and meeting days, although they sometimes meet in different rooms at varying times in order to accommodate testifiers or large audiences.



The weekly schedule of committee hearings is published on the last legislative day of the week throughout the legislative session. The schedule is available on a table in front of the Clerk's Office, in the Sunday editions of the Lincoln Journal Star and the Omaha World-Herald, in the weekly Unicameral Update and at www.nebraskalegislature.gov.

Testimony Suggestions

- ☑ Be aware that the sponsor of a bill may offer amendments when he or she presents the bill to a committee. These proposed amendments may change the way you feel about the bill and thus affect your testimony.
- ☑ Be prepared to answer questions asked by committee members.
- ☑ It is a good idea to prepare written copies of your testimony to distribute to the committee. This helps you get your message across more effectively by making it easy for senators to refer back to what you've said, and also helps to ensure an accurate hearing transcript. If you do this, bring enough copies for each committee member, plus three extras for support staff.
- ☑ Be prepared to limit your testimony and try not to repeat testimony offered by previous testifiers. Likewise, if you are providing written testimony, you are encouraged to summarize your main points rather than read your written testimony verbatim. Remember, while senators want to hear what you have to say, there may be numerous other testifiers who also want to be heard.
- ☑ Addressing committee members or testifiers from the audience is prohibited, and applause and other public demonstrations are not permitted at hearings.
- ☑ Please turn off cell phones to avoid disturbances during the hearing.
- ☑ You should not be offended if senators come and go during a hearing. They have other commitments, including the presentation of bills in other committees that are meeting simultaneously.



If auxiliary aids or reasonable accommodations are needed for you to attend a hearing, please call the Office of the Clerk of the Legislature, (402) 471-2271, or if you have hearing loss or a speech impairment, please call the Ombudsman's Office at (402) 471-2035 or (800) 742-7690. Advance notice of seven days is needed when requesting an interpreter.